

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 and 11-21 are pending in the application. Claim 10 is cancelled. Claims 20 and 21 are newly added.

Claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,526,210 to Harrison et al., hereinafter "Harrison". Claims 1, 17 and 19 are independent. Applicants amended claims 1, 17 and 19 to clarify a feature that is neither disclosed nor suggested by Harrison.

Independent claim 1 provides a connecting device for providing an optical connection between an apparatus having a plurality of ports for receiving and/or sending optical signals, and a connector. The connecting device includes a support plate that supports a plurality of adapters, and a locking device. Each of the plurality of adapters includes an adapter contact for providing a connection with one of the plurality of ports, and a connector contact for providing a connection with the connector. The locking device maintains a fixed position between the plurality of adapters and the plurality of ports. The support plate includes a member that interfaces with the locking device to activate the locking device.

Harrison discloses a system of organizing optical connector adapters that includes one or more panels that releasably retain optical connector adapters (col. 1, lines 48-50). The adapters are used to facilitate the mating of connectors to form connections between optical cables (col. 3, lines 44-46). In one embodiment, the system includes an optical connector retainer panel 230 that is shaped to form a series of side-by-side adapter openings 910A-910D (col. 5, lines 66-67).

Harrison discloses a system for retaining a plurality of optical fiber connector adapters that each act to facilitate a connection between two connectors. However, Harrison does not disclose a locking device to provide a fixed position between each

adapter and a respective apparatus port. Harrison further does not disclose a support plate that includes a member that can interface with and activate a locking device. Therefore, Harrison does not disclose a connecting device having "a **locking device** for maintaining a fixed position between said plurality of adapters and said plurality of ports, wherein said support plate includes a member that interfaces with said locking device to activate said locking device."

Therefore, Harrison fails to disclose or suggest the elements of claim 1. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over Harrison.

Claims 2-9 and 11-16 depend from claim 1. For at least the reasoning provided in support of claim 1, claims 2-9 and 11-16 are also patentable over Harrison.

Independent claims 17 and 19 include recitals similar to claim 1. Therefore, for reasoning similar to that provided in support of claim 1, claims 17 and 19 are also patentable over Harrison.

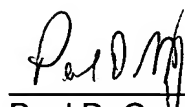
Claim 18 depends from claim 17. For at least the reasoning provided in support of claim 17, claim 18 is also patentable over Harrison.

For the reasons set forth above, the rejection of claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Harrison is overcome. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-19 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Favorable consideration is respectfully urged. An indication of the allowability of all pending claims by issuance of a Notice of Allowability is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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